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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT **Troops For Arctic Warfare**

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1. The USSR has 24 divisions fully trained for winter warfare, plus 6 special MPED and 2 air force divisions, making 32 divisions in all. The first winter warfare division, "1015," was organized in 1947. These divisions have about 7,000 men each, and are equipped with automatic arms, rocket guns, heavy trench mortars and 76 mm. guns. About 80 percent of the men are seasoned veterans with war experience, and professional soldiers. The divisions are considered elite troops. The commander of the MPED is General Birgousov.
2. One of the MPED divisions was moved 1,200 km in the severest weather during field practice. It took with it complete ammunition and food supplies, including dried fruit in airtight packages. Two of the MPED divisions are stationed near the eastern frontier of Finland.
3. The whole north Russian and Siberian coast is covered by a radar network, beginning with Petsamo. There are also not less than 15 large airdromes with subterranean hangars and repair shops. One of these airdromes is at Linnahamari (Petsamo); another is at Murmansk.
4. The icebreaker Yermak II is operating in Arctic waters. There are 5,600-ton training submarines in these waters. These submarines carry eight light torpedo bombers apiece and have a cruising radius of 15,000 km. The USSR is now building 24 submarines of this type outside the regular military budget.

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5. The first combined maneuvers on the northern coast and waters were held in August 1953. They consisted of an attack on Novaya Zemlya by five divisions, reinforced by air force and naval units. Just before these maneuvers, the troops in Petsamo, the Kola peninsula and Kantalaht/~~sic~~ were reinforced by 50 percent over their strength the previous summer. When a division was transferred from Murmansk it was replaced by an artillery division, an antiaircraft regiment, a ski battalion and a heavy rocket mortar battalion.
6. The annual February Red Army winter maneuvers were held this year in the Kiev military district with Marshal Timoshenko in command. There were several 210 mm atom gun units. These guns have a range of 45 km. The guns were made in Czechoslovakia and the ammunition in Poland. These guns appear to have greater mobility in terrain than the American 280 mm atom artillery.
7. Although Spitsbergen has been demilitarized since 1920, the Soviets have been erecting military bases and stores there. The troops are drawn from the Special MRAD divisions in Murmansk. The commander of division "1120," General Prostrey, has been visiting Barentsburg with his staff.
8. The guerrilla tactics developed by the Finns in their winter war and successfully adapted by the Soviets against Hitler have again become popular with the Soviet military experts. So have the smaller army units, with greater mobility and more fire power.

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